

**Lisa Bella Donna Embarks on *Electronic Voyages* with Solid State Logic's
BiG SiX, Fusion and THE BUS+**

*With SSL's BiG SiX as the centerpiece of her studio, Lisa Bella Donna appreciates its advanced hybrid production flexibility — from tracking, to mixing to analogue summing*

**Oxford, UK, December 7, 2023** — **Electronic musician and synth pioneer Lisa Bella Donna has been as prolific as ever, releasing no less than 13 albums since the beginning of last year. With each new recording she continues to refine her working process in the studio, so she is able to capture her signature detailed sounds — each representing a unique and delightful journey for the listener. After acquiring a Solid State Logic SiX mixer back in 2020, she has since extended her SSL-centric studio ecosystem with a BiG SiX desktop analogue mixer, a Fusion multi-effect processor and THE BUS+ compressor.**

“It all started with the SSL SiX a few years ago, and now that the BiG SiX is in my set up, it has pretty much been on every record ever since," she says. "The mixing faculties on BiG SiX are remarkable and the interface so flexible — I loved using it so much in the studio, that I decided to put it in a rack so I could use it on the road as well."

Bella Donna's most recent album, *Electronic Voyages*, available in both digital format and limited-edition vinyl, is an instant classic in the Berlin School heritage of modern synth music. Consisting of long-form instrumental tracks including "Double-Image", "Inner Space", "Metempsychosis", and "Cosmotopia", each of the album's 'four phases' take listeners on a journey through different spectrums of synthesis — each with its own nuanced and expertly composed collection of sounds.

**Electronic Voyages and a hybrid workflow with BiG SiX**

On *Electronic Voyages* and other recent work, Bella Donna has evolved her workflow into a hybrid of analogue tracking, mixing with a combination of plug-ins and outboard gear, and finally, analogue summing to create her final stereo mixes. "I *love* tracking with the BiG SiX, you can get beautifully clean/flat sounds going to tape or digital, as well as *pushing those faders* and that will open up a wide variety of colors, tones, and transients going in, depending on your gain staging.

However, for me, *mixing down* with it is an especially rewarding experience, because you can choose a strictly analogue signal path, or combine extensive implementation of plug-ins with things like reverbs and delays on specific channels," she says. "And when you pull these faders up, and dial in a little bit of EQ and compression, it is just remarkable. My last 14 records were all mixed manually through the SSL BiG SiX.”

"I feel the BiG SiX preamps play a big role in squeezing the juice & soul out of my tracks," Bella Donna says. "I manually dial up the EQs on the BiG SiX pretty aggressively at times. — even without stereo imaging and delays, you can add oxygen to a mix and evoke a highly dimensional sound with its EQ because you are able to carve out minuscule modulations living in that soundscape. Also, the preamps can beautifully capture and harness the mammoth power and dynamics of the Moog Modular & Moog One while retaining the range and transient response of those instruments.”

**A perfect form factor**
For Bella Donna, the BiG SiX contains the perfect form factor and level of control she requires while tracking and mixing. "One of the things that I loved about putting the BiG SiX in my studio is that it is helping establish a precedent of how many channels I typically want to use on a recording," she explains. "For instance, *Electronic Voyages* is no more than eight channels, yet my entire room is full of modular synthesizers. All the trunk lines from my modular system are all hardwired into a patchbay that routes directly into the BiG SiX."

On *Electronic Voyages*, Bella Donna tracked everything directly from BiG SiX to an eight-channel tape deck; this was then transferred to the computer for more overdubs and treatment before sending back through the BiG SiX for final summing. While tracking, she says she typically runs stereo groups into the BiG SiX for her synth voices and assigns drums, percussion or sub bass frequencies to the mono channels.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Bella Donna likes to 'print' exactly what is coming out of her system: "For lot of what I do, everything is committed coming right out of the modular into the BiG SiX, to magnetic tape. Then I will transfer the tapes into digital. From there, I’ll ornament the pieces with any needed overdubs, and create mix down and effect buses which I then route through the BiG SiX and perform my final mix to a digital 2-track & Otari MX-5050 Simultaneously.”

**Synth magic with Fusion and THE BUS+**

One of her more recent 'secret weapons' is the THE BUS+ outboard compressor, which she also uses for both tracking and mixing. "I have a series of (8) Moog 960 sequencers in my modular, and I will have a set of these sequencers doing the main theme in a piece of music, as well as another 960 controlling mixing and panning of various stereo synth voices. I will have an additional 960 sequencer routed to the side chain of THE BUS+. Using this method of side chaining on THE BUS+, I can gate or attenuate the amount of compression I want to use for a specific step on the sequence to the exact nuance." THE BUS+'s multi-band & mid-side compression is fantastic," she continues. "Being able to achieve evolving movement out of an envelope by compressing or expanding frequencies is great. THE BUS+ is just a perfect fit with electronic music."

Bella Donna also uses the SSL Fusion — not only on her sequences, but other effected 'sparkly parts' of her compositions that bring more dimension: "What’s really fun to do is to have a side-chain sequence activating the Fusion, cranking up the Vintage Drive and Stereo Image width knob simultaneously, and then pulling the drive back and the Width up as the track recedes dynamics. The FUSION can really clean up your mix without ever sterilizing it.

The HF Compressor is incredible for work that I do with vocalists and drummers. You can really retain the range of the tones you are crafting, but creating room for everyone in the mix.”

The FUSION offers tremendous clarity and weight to a mix when needed, without clogging up a mix. It also adds so much width and dimension. The Violet EQ is amazing on instruments like my vintage ARP String Ensemble that I use on almost every release. The Violet EQ is also magic on the master bus of a mix as well. The Fusion offers a very musical and balanced signal path to any mix. I was truly thrilled to finally incorporate it into my set up."

Like most of her electronic music catalogue, *Electronic Voyages* is meant to be listened to actively rather than passively, and this is how it was created: "My electronic music is not prim and proper — I like some rough edges, grit, width, and I love extreme dynamics," she says. "How much can I get out of the stereo space for each piece? To what length can I make the listener feel like they are traveling to somewhere far beyond the stereo space?

My intentions with music is for listeners to become so absorbs in the sound of each musical passageway, that they forget who is making the music. To unlock a wide-open space for them to explore their own minds and muse while listening. To hopefully return feeling inspired to create in some way. This is why I use modular synthesizers. I spent years recording & mixing other instruments. However, as a composer, this is where I found that I have a level of musical and sonic command that I cannot fully realize anywhere else. I want to create an inviting & everlasting sonic tapestry of music and sound for my listeners."

To learn more about Lisa Bella Donna, please visit [www.lisabelladonna.com](http://www.lisabelladonna.com). To preview or purchase her new album *Electronic Voyages*, please visit Lisa Bella Donna’s Bandcamp page: <https://lisabelladonna.bandcamp.com/album/electronic-voyages-2>.

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